



# Mimulus MEMO

California Native Plant Society  
Kern County Chapter  
summer 2005

## CNPS President's Message

We send Laura Stockton a BIG thank you for her time and effort on behalf of CNPS Kern Chapter as our president for the past five years. While serving as President, Laura kept our chapter from going dormant. She encouraged members to take on projects and to take "our" turns as officers, mentoring us through the transitions. Many, many thanks, Laura. Many thanks, also, to Debby Kroeger who served as editor of the newsletter and to Lorraine Unger for her stint as secretary.

We welcome the future efforts of Steve Hampson as our newsletter editor and webmaster, Harriet Morris as treasurer, and Laura, volunteering again, as secretary. Other members have agreed to continue their roles as committee chairs; I am grateful for their continuing service.

I hope each of you got out and about to see our California native plants, exceeding all of your expectations this very wet spring! My family went to Death Valley twice, because the first trip was so amazingly green! And white and yellow and pink. Six weeks later the green had faded, but the flowering plants were larger, with more numerous blooms. The road sides were filled with cars from all over the U.S., and actual human beings were actually walking among the flowers, oohing and aahing and taking photographs. People DO respond to and appreciate nature, and natural places are shrinking as the number of people are growing. We on the valley side of Kern are so fortunate to have access to the huge, curving swath of land that includes Wind Wolves Preserve and the Carrizo Plain National Monument. Let's help save some more land!

All of this leads to asking you to offer your time to one or more projects we may develop. Our field trips led us to sites or people who can use our help. The Sand Ridge Preserve has a slope or two covered with an alien mustard, and Denis Kearns of the BLM reports help needed over by Lake Isabella. This July 30<sup>th</sup>, we need your help to celebrate National Invasive Weeds Awareness Week (which is actually July 13-22, but who is in town in mid-July?). Please read the article on page 6. And please show up at the Panorama Vista Preserve.

Lucy Clark

## Kern CNPS Honors County Science Fair Winners

Lucy was out of town, Laura, Randi and Ellen were working, Erma is too shy; that left me. So, I represented Kern CNPS at the county science fair. Our board had decided to support budding botanists with a reward for their interest in plants!

The County Science Fair was held on April 13<sup>th</sup> at the convention center. The finalists exhibited and explained their projects to the judges in the morning. The winners were announced in the afternoon. Students came forward to receive their first, second or third place ribbons. While there are a number of awards given by companies or organizations, there were very few representatives to actually present these additional awards. I was there, made my way to the podium, and announced to an auditorium full of students and parents that Kern CNPS is recognizing and honoring the winners in the plant biology category. I shook hands with the winners and handed each a \$100 check; they were very surprised and pleased. The junior high winner was Cici Pandol; the high school winner was Samantha Lowther.

The organizers of the event are always grateful to have representatives hand out the awards; it means more to the students. Our chapter plans on continuing this support; it is great for the students, a good way to encourage interest in plants and great community exposure for our chapter. It was my pleasure to represent you by doing this. -Debby Kroeger

## *Panorama Vista Preserve by Andy Honig*

*A wonderful place to discover native plants and observe wildlife is right on Bakersfield's doorstep. It is the Panorama Vista Preserve, below the Panorama Bluffs. The approximately 800 acre Preserve extends almost from Manor Dr. to China Grade Loop.*

*Panorama Vista Preserve was acquired from ARCO with community donations about 8 years ago and is now owned by the non-profit Kern River Corridor Endowment. It is the intent of the Endowment that Panorama Vista remain undeveloped and open to all hikers, equestrians and bicyclists. This, of course, includes botanizers and bird watchers.*

*The western section of the Preserve as far as Rocky Point Weir, (where the Carrier Canal branches off from the Kern River) is no longer an active oil field and the public is welcome to enjoy all of it. East of Rocky Point, however, there is still considerable oil extraction by Chevron-Texaco and the public is urged to stay on the horse and bike paths.*

*Currently the Kern River Corridor Endowment is in the early stages of developing a management plan. Much of the Preserve not adjacent to the river was degraded by grazing and oil-related activities and is in need of re-vegetation. We have begun growing seedlings of California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) and elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*) from seeds collected in the Preserve in anticipation of restoration. Although it is not yet clear that valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) once grew in the Preserve, the environment seems suitable and we are starting some from acorns collected at the Windwolves Preserve.*

*The California sycamores, in particular, are worthy of note. They are most numerous south of the river near the west end and it is likely some are several hundred years old. Recruitment of California sycamore occurs after flooding, but the Preserve has not flooded since the construction of Lake Isabella dam in the early 1950s. Therefore the Preserve's native California sycamores are no longer regenerating. After a recent tour of the*

*Preserve, Pam Muick, CNPS Executive Director, commented that such a stand of California sycamore is now rarely seen in California. This makes it imperative that steps are taken to ensure the perpetuation of these trees.*

*For a lists of plants inventoried by Steve Hampson in Panorama Vista go to the temporary Kern CNPS website, <http://www.ics.uci.edu/~hampson/kcnps/> and look under "plant lists".*

*Panorama Vista is also a great place for bird-watching particularly for water birds, hawks, roadrunners and quail; a flock of rosie parrots also frequents the property. Many kinds of mammals have been sighted, such as jack rabbits, cottontails, squirrels, coyotes, kit fox, and bob cats, and there is obvious evidence of beaver activity along the river bank.*

*There are several ways to enter Panorama Vista. Most members of the public walk down the bluff trail that begins near where Alta Vista meets Panorama. The less visited Panorama Vista north of the river can be accessed by continuing east along the extension of Roberts Lane beyond Manor and past the stables. The area where the most magnificent sycamores are found can be entered by following Denise Street, opposite the bikepath parking lot entrance off Manor, and proceeding past the Baptist church and then winding through the automatic gates north along Fallgatter Street to Georgia, and then east to the end of the road.. The best entry point on the east side is through the horse trail that comes out opposite Derrell's Storage on a spur off of China Grade Loop or from the nearby bikepath.*

*I strongly recommend that CNPS members explore Panorama Vista, perhaps making several trips to view the different sections.*

*Contact Andy at [andym5@cox.net](mailto:andym5@cox.net) if you have any questions or comments (e.g. whether valley oak ever grew at this location) or might be interested in doing any plant surveys or restoration work at the site. Additions to the plant list are always welcome. Note: There was a fire there in late June that covered a couple acres, so the regeneration now and next spring should be interesting to observe.*

# Sand Ridge Field Trip

Our first field trip of the year, led by Ellen Cypher to the Sand Ridge Preserve just east of town, was a great success, with a good turn out both of plants and people. This is a rather unusual area and well worth a visit when in bloom. It is also a good location to see the increasingly rare Bakersfield Cactus (*Opuntia basilaris* var. *treleasei*).

The plants on Sand Ridge are a combination of species from two biomes: Valley Grassland and Mojave Desert. Here is what the trail guide has to say:

*Standing here, you can easily imagine that you're deep within the Mojave Desert, far from the San Joaquin Valley. The plants and terrain around you are more typical of the desert than the valley: cactus, shrubs, many wildflowers and hilly topography. Several factors contribute to our desert-like environment: periodic infusion of desert plant seeds blown in from the desert to the east, the presence of sandy, well-drained soils similar to those in the desert, and our extremely low annual rainfall.*

*Over the past 140,000 years, Caliente Creek has deposited silt, sand, and rock forming a large alluvial fan in the southeastern San Joaquin Valley. Winds blowing down the canyon 9-10,000 years ago carried sand and silt gouged by glaciers and the stream to the valley floor. Upon reaching the openness of the canyon mouth, the wind speed dropped and the load of sand and dust settled into a large dune which is now Sand Ridge.*

*Sand Ridge is one of The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) oldest preserves. Jack Zaninovich and others with the volunteer Tejon Subchapter of TNC purchased the original 120-acre site in 1965 for \$18,000. They secured the funds through local fund-raising efforts. In 1984, a 10-acre parcel was added at the southern end. Then, in 1990, another 144 acres were acquired by TNC to the north and east. The preserve now contains 275 acres and stretches over a mile long and one-half mile wide, covering the ridge and a large portion of Caliente Creekbed on the east.*

Sand Ridge is now managed by the Center For Natural Lands Management. They have a website at <http://www.cnlm.org/preserve.html> and manage

a number other sites including the Pixley Vernal Pools and Semitropic Ridge. They have web sites for each preserve and the one for Sand Ridge is at <http://www.cnlm.org/sandridge.html>.

Here is the plant list Ellen provided.

Ephedraceae (ephedra family)

Ephedra californica mormon/mexican/desert tea

Amaranthaceae (amaranth family)

Amaranthus sp.

Asclepiaceae (milkweed family)

Asclepias sp. milkweed

Asteraceae (Compositae) (sunflower family)

Ambrosia (Franseria) acanthicarpa annual bursage/ragweed

Centaurea melitensis tocalote

Chaenactis glabriuscula yellow pincushion

Encelia actoni (E. virginensis ssp. actoni)

Filago californica California fluffweed

Hemizonia pallida Kern tarplant

Heterotheca grandiflora telegraph weed

Hymenoclea salsola cheeseweed, cheesebush

Hypochaeris glabra smooth cat's ear

Lactuca serriola prickly lettuce

Layia glandulosa white tidy-tips

Lepidospartum squamatum scale-broom

Malacothrix californica

Malacothrix glabrata desert dandelion

Senecio vulgaris common groundsel

Sonchus sp. sow-thistle

Stephanomeria sp. wreath plant

Stylocline gnaphaloides everlasting nest straw

Boraginaceae (borage family)

Amsinckia menziesii var. menziesii common fiddleneck

Plagiobothrys arizonicus arizona popcorn flower

Brassicaceae (Cruciferae) (mustard family)

Brassica tournefortii wild turnip, Sahara mustard

Caulanthus coulter jewelflower

Hirschfeldia incana (Brassica geniculata) shortpod mustard

Tropidocarpum gracile slender keel-fruit, dobie pod

Cactaceae (cactus family)

Opuntia basilaris var. treleasei bakersfield cactus

Capparaceae (caper family)

Isomeris arborea (Cleome isomeris) bladderpod

Caryophyllaceae (pink family)

Loeflingia squarrosa var. squarrosa

Chenopodiaceae (goosefoot family)

Atriplex polycarpa allscale, common saltbush, cattle spinach

Salsola tragus (S. australis, iberica, kali) russian thistle

Crassulaceae (stonecrop family)

Crassula connata (Tillaea erecta) pigmy stonecrop

Cucurbitaceae (gourd family)

Cucurbita palmata coyote gourd/melon

Marah sp. wild cucumber, big-root, man-root

Cuscutaceae (split from Convolvulaceae) (dodder family)

Cuscuta sp. dodder, witch's hair



Euphorbiaceae (spurge family)

Chamaesyce (Euphorbia) sp. prostrate spurge  
Croton californicus California croton

Fabaceae (Leguminosae) (pea family)

Lotus strigosus (L. tomentellus) hairy lotus  
Lotus wrangelianus (L. subpinnatus) calf/short-winged lotus  
Lupinus benthamii spider lupine  
Lupinus nanus sky/grass lupine

Geraniaceae (geranium family)

Erodium botrys long-beaked/broad-leaf filaree  
Erodium cicutarium red stemmed filaree  
Erodium moschatum white/green-stemmed filaree

Hydrophyllaceae (waterleaf family)

Phacelia distans blue/common/fern phacelia  
Phacelia tanacetifolia lacy/tansy leaf phacelia  
Phacelia sp.

Lamiaceae (Labiatae) (mint family)

Salvia carduacea thistle sage  
Salvia columbariae chia

Liliaceae (lily family)

Dichelostemma (Brodiaea) capitatum (B., D. pulchella) blue dicks

Nyctaginaceae (four-O'clock family)

Abronia pogonantha mojave sand verbena  
Mirabilis californica (M. laevis) wishbone bush

Onagraceae (evening-primrose family)

Camissonia campestris ssp. campestris mojave sun cups  
Oenothera deltoides ssp. cognata evening primrose

Oxalidaceae (oxalis or wood-sorrel family)

Oxalis sp. wood-sorrel

Papaveraceae (poppy family)

Eschscholzia californica California poppy

Plantaginaceae (plantain family)

Plantago erecta dwarf plantain

Poaceae (grass family)

Avena barbata slender wild oat  
Bromus diandrus (B. rigidus) ripgut grass/brome  
Bromus madritensis ssp. rubens (B. r.) red/foxtail chess/brome  
Hordeum murinum farmer's foxtail  
Schismus barbatus mediterranean/split grass  
Vulpia myuros var. myuros (Festuca m.) foxtail/rattail fescue

Polemoniaceae (phlox family)

Eriastrum pluriflorum

Polygonaceae (buckwheat family)

Eriogonum fasciculatum California buckwheat  
Eriogonum gracillimum slender/rose-and-white buckwheat  
Eriogonum sp.  
Pterostegia drymarioides wing-over, fairy mist, granny's hairnet  
Rumex hymenosepalus canaigre, wild rhubarb

Salicaceae (willow family)

Populus fremontii ssp. fremontii alamo/fremont cottonwood

Scrophulariaceae (figwort family)

Castilleja exserta ssp. exserta (Orthocarpus purpurascens) owl's-clover

Solanaceae (nightshade family)

Datura wrightii (D. meteloides) western jimsonweed  
Nicotiana quadrivalvis (N. bigelovii) indian tobacco

Don't forget that we have an active web site now.

The location is the same as always:

<http://www.cnps.org/chapters/kern/>

but it has a link to a new location that changes now and then. Specifically note the “news flash” section. And, as noted there, we also have an email list for occasional announcements. If you would like to be added to the email list, follow the instructions in the README file in the “news flash” section.

## Highlights of 2005 Field Trips

### Sand Ridge Preserve with thanks to Ellen Cypher

About 18 people joined Ellen, a long time member and working botanist, to see this treasure, so close to Bakersfield. Although we saw no Bakersfield Cactus in bloom, the Thistle Sage (*Salvia carduacea*) were amazing! Those lavender flowers with their orange exserted anthers caught the eyes of all the photographers, as did the large white Evening Primrose (*Oenothera deltoides*)! Ellen taught us the differences between two kinds of Lotus, calf and spider. The sign at the trail head honoring Jack Zanninovich, one of our late members, for his work to save the ridge showed us what one dedicated individual can do.

### Carrizo Plains N.M. with thanks to Denis Kearns

This trip was a major highlight, as Denis, BLM Botanist and a current member, took us along back roads to vernal pools, up canyons to see hillsides of Desert Candle (*Caulanthus inflatus*); huge displays of more Thistle Sage; *Eremalche parryi*, a lovely shrub of rose flowers; the orange San Joaquin Blazing Star (*Mentzelia pectinata*); and steep hillsides of yellow Coreopsis and purple phacelia! It was all spectacular, especially seeing *Delphinium recurvatum*, Alkali Larkspur, a rare plant around Soda Lake. It was a long day of caravanning, but worth every minute of being in those wide open spaces!

### Wind Wolves Preserve with thanks to David Clendenen

We Kern types were joined by CNPS members from Sonoma for another gorgeous day of remote hills and canyons! Along with Ft. Tejon woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum lanatum*), Evening Snow (*Linanthus dichotomus*), and Stink Lily (*Fritillaria agrestis*), it was a critter day. We saw herds of Pronghorn Antelope, Tule Elk, Deer, a pair of Coyotes, a pair of Golden Eagles, a Bob Cat, and a mama Great Horned Owl on her nest in a wall with at least two chicks. Interesting geologic observations were shared by member Jan Gillespie. It was an altogether great experience.

## **Maturango Museum Wildflower Show and Short Canyon with thanks to Steve Hampson**

Our member Steve Hampson invited all to see the Wildflower Show in Ridgecrest in the morning (over 200 species on display), then led a wildflower hike to Short Canyon. Highlights were meeting Mary Ann Henry, the driving force behind the establishment of the Short Canyon Preserve and seeing (and smelling) hole-in-the-sand (*Nicolletia occidentalis*), indigo bush (*Psoralea arborescens*), spectacle-pod (*Dithyrea californica*), limestone live-forever (*Dudleya californica*), and sand blossoms (*Linanthus parryi*).

## **Hungry Valley State Vehicle Recreation Area with thanks to Kim Matthews and Kathy Sanders**

Incongruous as it seems, there were plenty of *Coreopsis*, huge sweeps of them, in protected areas at this ORV park. The area near the Gorman entrance booth is quite different from the ORV area proper, and had large stands of *Malacothrix*, *Layia*, *Lasthenia*, *Gilia* and many more. There was very little ORV activity in this area and it is treated more as a nature preserve than part of an ORV park. We were a little early for mariposa lily, but in years past, the hill leading to the main ORV area has had an amazing show of different colors of *Calochortus venustus*, and main area has had a lot of *C. kennedyi*.

## **Mill Creek Mosey with Lucy Clark**

This Kern Canyon Hike offered its usual diverse wildflowers, due to its different facing slopes. We saw a surprising fern (not listed for Kern County), the California cloak fern (*Notholaena californica*), lots of beautiful red Indian Pink (*Silene californica*), *Eremalche parryi*, blooming Spanish bayonet (*Yucca whipplei*), and a broomrape (*Orobanche uniflora*). We were at first disappointed by our failure to see the red California Newt in the Mill Creek waters, but we finally found those red “gummy” newts on damp ground, next to streams under the leaf litter.

## **Walker Pass with Twisselman, Moe, and Jepson**

Two carloads converged at the Walker Pass Campground Restrooms before 10 a.m. (Great minds....tiny bladders?) The diversity of plants within a 15' diameter of the toilets kept turn-takers interested and arguing. At the pass itself, there was so much to be seen! Some of the more interesting flowers were scale bud (*Anisocoma acaulis*), balsam-root (*Balsamorhiza hirtella*), thread-stem (*Nemacladus*), various lupins (*Lupinus adsurgens*, *bicolor*, *concinus*, *excubitus*), blazing-star (*Mentzelia congesta*), and red-triangles (*Centrostegia thurberi*).

A drive up Chimney Peak Road led to gorgeous road cut displays of *Nolina parryi*, a “mutant” *Lupine* and Steve Hampson showed us how to ID *Ceanothus*.

## **Rancheria Road at Highway 155 with Steve Hampson**

The highlight here was the Shirley Meadows Star Tulip (*Calochortus westonii*), a small white flowered lily that covered the sides of the road. It is our own rare lily, restricted to the Greenhorn Mountains. Lots of *Hydrophyllum occidentale* (the genus the water-leaf family, *Hydrophyllaceae* is named for), five-spot (*Nemophila maculata*), lavender windows (*Phacelia exilis*), checkerbloom (*Sidalcea ranunculacea*), several monkey-flowers (*Mimulus aurantiacus*, *constrictus*, *floribundus*, *guttatus*, and *whitneyi*), dwarf lousewort (*Pedicularis semibarbata*) and many other interesting species.

A big thank you to all who participated! It was really enjoyable to be a part of groups with first class experts willing to help us beginners learn a bit more every trip. Many, many thanks to our volunteer leaders who took responsibility for helping the rest of us have terrific days with our California native plants. Getting to know other native plant lovers was a big bonus! We're looking forward to next year already.

## **Exotic plants and Noxious weeds**

Man has been both intentionally and accidentally transporting plants to and from the new world for hundreds of years, and thousands of exotic species now grow in the United States. Some add spice to life, some are a bit annoying, and a few are nothing short of ecological time bombs. “Noxious weed” is a legal term, used by state and federal agencies to denote plants that pose serious threats to agriculture and wildlife.

Just as pineapples don't grow in Nebraska, most voyaging exotics never find a suitable new home. However, some do become established. Some blend in harmlessly, but a few take over, prosper and forever alter the habitat. Since the mammals, birds, insects, fungi, bacteria and viruses that preyed on these plants in their homeland didn't all follow them to North America, they have a distinct competitive edge. And it doesn't help that man has changed the environment in ways that often favors invasive weeds over native plants (e.g. by over-grazing). Four thousand exotic plants are recognized as “pests” by the US government, 90 are federally listed as noxious weeds, and dozens more are listed as noxious by various states. Noxious weeds currently infest about 100 million acres of North America and spread to

more than 3 million new acres each year, invading an estimated 6 square miles of Forest Service and BLM lands *every day*. They have already claimed 7 million acres of national parks.

As a single example among many, Tamarisk, commonly called saltcedar, was introduced to the United States from Eurasia in the 1800s as a source of wood, shade and erosion control. The tree spread wildly out of control invading more than a million acres of the arid Southwest. Crowding along streams, canals and reservoirs, tamarisk guzzles about 5 million acre-feet of water a year - which is more than the capacity of Shasta Dam, one of the largest in the world. In addition, tamarisk exudes salt, making soil inhospitable to native plants and consequently many native animals.

But you can make a difference! For example, Tamarisk was well established and spreading in the Wind Wolves preserve, but over the past few years volunteer parties have, tree-by-tree, tediously removed almost all of it. That particular battle is not over yet, but the good guys are winning.

Like a wildfire, one hot spot can produce more, so it is important to identify and eradicate infestations when they are small and manageable. The biggest bang per buck is in prevention, so your help now can help avoid a much bigger, and possibly unmanageable problem later on..

(Much of the above was borrowed from the pamphlet "An exotic invasion of elk county weeds")

**Help Celebrate CNPS' 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary & National Invasive Weeds Awareness Week**

**Why: Invasives** move into areas and crowd out plants native to the area, which then diminishes habitat available to native fauna to live and raise their young. So we end with less variety in our habitat along the river, in this case.

**When: 7 am, July 31<sup>st</sup>**

**Where: Panorama Vista Preserve, east of Manor. Meet at the closed white gate on the Robert's Ln. extension approximately .5 mile west of Manor, after the stables on the right. The Ailanthus to be removed is about .5 miles past the gate, which Andy will open.**

**Bring: Water, hat, gloves, long pants, rugged shoes, long sleeve shirt, loppers or heavy duty pruning shears and pruning saws. Cold water will be provided.**

**Activity: We will saw and cut down Ailanthus, then get out of the way so herbicide (the one used at home) can be applied by the trained volunteers. We will pile up the cuttings, also. If we run out of Ailanthus at that site before we run out of energy, there is more on the other side Manor that we can attack. Alternatively, we can stroll around the preserve for awhile. Afterwards, we will adjourn for brunch somewhere and toast CNPS with our coffee.**

**The annual plant sale is scheduled for Sat., October 22<sup>nd</sup> at CALM. So it is time to begin thinking about fall plantings. We will need YOUR help for the sale. More info to come..**

Previously, we have sought your feedback on your **Experiences (successes or failures) in Growing California Native Plants** Here are some reports:

*Calocedrus decurrens*, incense cedar, grown in the Rosedale area with sandy soil & western exposure. This plant receives water by drip system 2x/ week in the summer and no additional water in the winter. Beginning as a 1' seedling, it was slow growing at first, but in now 20' tall and better looking than the neighbor's redwood. (editor's note: redwoods are NOT well suited for this area. Cedar is a great substitute for a tall evergreen tree.)

*Trichostema lanatum*, wooly blue curls is grown in Bodfish by Eve Lager. In the Bodfish clay soil with no watering, Eve states that it is growing vigorously and has spectacular blooms.

*Fremontodendron*, flannel bush, is growing in the decomposed granite around Bill Foster's in Weldon. It grows 6" - 12"/ year with only spring & winter natural water.

How are your plants doing??? !

**Experiences (successes or failures) in Growing California Native Plants.**

Species name

Common name

Soil conditions

Exposure

Watering

Results

Wildlife use

Other comments

Your name

Address

Return this to: CNPS, P O Box 9622, Bakersfield, CA 93389-9622.

CNPS – Kern County Chapter  
PO Box 9622  
Bakersfield, CA 93389-9622

The mission of the California Native Plant Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to conserve them and their natural habitats through science, education, advocacy, horticulture and land stewardship.